



WEEKLY REPORT

State Senator Gary Nodler
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LEGISLATION WOULD SIMPLIFY MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION FOR TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATIONS

Tax issues are likely to be one of most important subjects dealt with in the 2004 Legislative Session, and I believe that a bill I've sponsored will have a positive impact on the state's tax-exempt organizations.

Under Senate Bill 1048, churches, charitable groups and other tax-exempt organizations would need only to bring proof of tax-exempt status to renew a motor vehicle's registration.

Logically, it should be a simple process for tax-exempt organizations to renew motor vehicle licenses. However, after a visit to the Carl Junction Senior Citizens Center it was brought to my attention that this annual chore was far from simple.

Last December, I visited the center for a breakfast and while talking to a local resident, I learned that when it was time to renew his organization's motor vehicle license registration, a special trip had to be made to the county assessor's office to certify the center's tax-exempt status.

That didn't make sense to me. It added an extra step that wasn't needed.

SB 1048 is a direct result of that conversation.

This legislation is just common sense and will save those involved time and effort.

The bill has been assigned to the Senate Financial and Governmental Organization, Veterans' Affairs and Elections Committee.

I want to thank that Carl Junction citizen for bringing this to my attention.

This week testimony was presented in the Senate Ways and Means Committee on legislation I have co-sponsored that would implement several important changes to our state's tax credit program.

The tax credit program is a valuable economic development tool for both urban and rural communities, but reforms are needed to improve the system's efficiency and make it more accountable to the taxpayers of the state.

Among the changes proposed under Senate Bill 1099:

- Establishment of a system of classifications for tax credits and minimum requirements for each classification. The requirements are designed to verify compliance and instill confidence in the tax credit system, but avoid undue burdens on the individuals who apply for the credits.
- Implement reporting requirements focused on gathering meaningful information in order to assist future legislatures in assessing the value of tax credit programs.
- Implement a compliance system for reporting. Failure to meet the annual reporting requirements would result in graduated penalties.

These changes would help to modernize and streamline the program, so that taxpayers would get a better return on their investment. Taxpayers need to feel like these tax credits are a good use of their money.

In other business, I testified before the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday, on behalf of legislation that I've sponsored that would make a variety of changes to the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) aimed at putting Missouri's educational standards in line with the new requirements established under the federal No Child Left Behind law.

This bill would require that by June 30, 2006, the State Board of Education align the performance standards of the MAP test so that the performance standards meet, but do not exceed, the performance standards of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exam.

The chairman of the Education Committee has assured me that a vote will be taken in the coming week and the bill will be sent on to the Senate floor for debate.

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